LIFE, LIGHT AND LOVE

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LIFE, LIGHT, AND LOVE:

THE PRINCIPLES OF HOLINESS.

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LIFE, LIGHT, AND LOVE:

THE PRINCIPLES OF HOLINESS.

I HAVE been requested by the Trustees of the Fernley Lecture to deliver a discourse on the subject of Christian Holiness. In the resolution which expressed their wish, the proposed discourse was called a Sermon or Lecture. A lecture on any branch of Christian theology will always partake of the character of a sermon; if not in form, in substance. It will address the heart as well as the intellect: it will invite and persuade, as well as expound. Its every definition contains an appeal: its every inference involves a demand. To no department of theology do these remarks apply with greater force than to the one now before us, discussing, as it does, our immediate relations with God. Here, if anywhere, the distinction between practical and speculative must cease. And as this discourse may perhaps be printed, I have the more confidence in asking you not to let criticism usurp the place of conscience, but to take to your hearts those views you may approve of rather than be distracted by any errors you may find it needful to condemn.

As holiness is a conception peculiar to revelation, we must not search for it among the schools of philosophy. We must resort to the fountain-head of truth. Yet we may expect the teachings of Scripture to be corroborated by the facts of experience, as well as by those inferences from them which a sound philosophy may enable us to draw. We will

study holiness first, where it first existed, in the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity; and then as reproduced in the contrite hearts in which He deigns to dwell.

Holiness in God is the Scriptural name for that eternal principle of rectitude which lies at the root both of the Divine nature and of the Divine government. It embraces, first, a conception of all that is comprehended in that principle in its full amplitude and grandeur; secondly, a propension or affection toward it as the expression of what is dearest to the Godhead—the first good, first perfect, and first fair; and thirdly, a choice of and determination to it as worthy to reign supreme in the counsels of Deity.

Let us first consider the term "rectitude" as a quality of the mind, or the term "right" as a notion that comes before the mind. We can only do so by placing the created and the uncreated side by side, and by affirming the absolute identity of the distinction between right and wrong in God and in man. The infinitude of the Divine Mind may vastly amplify the contents of these notions: it can never tend to confound the two. We can only gain any idea of God's perfections as we project upon His immensity the features of our own finite nature. Revelation warrants this procedure. By declaring us to have been made in God's image, it teaches us that we derive our moral convictions from the Infinite Mind. Their irresolvableness and universality point clearly to such a source. We have no starting-point in the moral sphere, any more than in the intellectual or material, unless we find it in the throne, yea, in the heart, of the Eternal. If, therefore, any one should ask me for a *definition* of right, I should decline to attempt it. I should say, Such a definition is alike unnecessary and impos-

sible. Impossible, because right is an ultimate principle: unnecessary, because our common moral consciousness makes it known to every child of man.

With this, the doctrine of Scripture, concurs the teaching of the intuitionalist school in philosophy, with which alone can any sound theology be connected. There is, I know, a form of intuitionalism which so exalts man's original powers as to preclude the necessity of revelation, or at least as to make man a judge of its pretensions, an analyst of its purity, a verifier of its results. But surely it is possible to hold that men possess an innate consciousness of the distinction between right and wrong, and yet to maintain that they need Divine instruction as to the particular classes of actions which they must pursue or avoid. This is only an extension to the supernatural sphere of what many allow in the natural. Our intuitions of time, space, and causality are born with us, but lie hidden till developed by experience. So our moral intuitions are born with us, but need to be deepened, defined, and authorised by God's revelation of Himself in providence and grace. [1.]

To the intuitionalist scheme in one or other of its forms, the only alternative is that which derives all our knowledge from experience, and resolves the distinction of right and wrong into a tendency toward a greater or less happiness. Some, indeed, are bold enough to make the happiness of the individual his sole concern. Others say that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the final end of man. Either opinion really founds upon self-love, an instinct lawful in itself, but never intended by the Creator to be the sole arbiter of human conduct and destiny. If here we transfer to the Divine what we discover in the human, we

must make either the happiness of the universe or His own happiness the ultimate end of God. We thus gain little in point of comprehensibility, since the happy, as these philosophers regard it, is not more definable than the right. But we lose much in dignity and authoritativeness, inasmuch as we have descended from the domain of intelligence to that of sensibility. We have made feeling our arbiter instead of judgment. We have thrown the reins on the neck of an instinct which most of all needs cultivation and control—an instinct we have in common with the brutes. And we have denied the very existence of an instinct which alone can tame the other—an instinct which raises us far above the brutes, and by its depth and solemnity proves itself worthy of a better name.

In fact, the greatest happiness principle separates man from men, and man from God. For there will always be a doubt in every man's mind, whether his neighbour be really seeking the general happiness or his own, and the same doubt will extend to the acts of God. Since He is the greatest of beings, why should He not seek His own happiness, and what warrant is there that that will always be secured through the happiness of His creatures? But if the right be admitted as the ultimate end of being, the standard is one in which all may agree, man with men as well as man with God. This, however, does not deprive us of the liberty, or exempt us from the necessity, of paying attention to the consequences of our actions. The desire for happiness is nowhere discredited in the Book by which we shall be judged: on the contrary, it is continually appealed to. But happiness receives there a loftier interpretation than Epicurus and Bentham would allow. "To lift the average of earthly joy"

is set forth by one of this school's disciples, in a recent production, as the great end of life. A better end, perhaps some will say, than to "wade through slaughter to a throne," but utterly unworthy to be the sole occupation of one who believes himself and all mankind immortal.

Much loftier is the Scriptural interpretation of the happy. It is set forth as the necessary and inseparable attendant of the right, wherever that is worthily conceived and heartily obeyed. Happiness is a particular kind of pleasure. All happiness is pleasure, but all pleasure is not happiness. Pleasure is the reflex of any energy exerted upon a suitable object to the full, and not more than the full, extent of its capacity. Pain is the reflex of such an energy when exerted on an unsuitable object, or on a suitable one in such a manner as not sufficiently to occupy it or to overtax its strength. Now, the moral consciousness being supreme in man, the greatest pleasure arises from spontaneous obedience to its promptings. And it is this pleasurable exercise of energies of which God and His law are the objects, that constitutes always and everywhere the happiness of man. Lesser pleasures may arise from the gratification of other desires, but they cannot make us happy. Pursued in subordination to the ruling principle, they may augment the happiness arising from its sway. Pursued in disregard of the ruling principle, they cannot compensate the misery following on its violation. But the pleasure arising from the predominance within us of the right, that is to say, of the law of God as the only adequate exponent of it, is sufficient to countervail the pain arising from the sacrifice, if that be possible, of all other desires put together. "A good man is satisfied from himself." And we know how close is the connection between the answer of

a good conscience in this world and the anticipation of blessedness in the next. Scripture blends all that is good in intuitionalism with all that is good in utilitarianism, and eliminates the weaknesses of both. It combines the ideal and the practical, and redeems the former from its visionariness and the latter from its grossness, by connecting both with God and eternity.

We must now return to our definition of the holiness of God. It embraces a comprehension of the right on the part of the Divine Intelligence, a propension toward and complacency in it on the part of the Divine Affections, and a determination to it on the part of the Divine Will. We follow Scriptural precedent in speaking of God as possessed of intelligence, affection and will.

A Scriptural warrant will be demanded for this definition of God's holiness. I think we may find it in the symbols of the Gospel and first Epistle of St. John. In the final summary of Christ's doctrine, as in the final summary of Christ's history which the same Apostle penned, we find the three terms, Life, Light, and Love. "God is Light," says the Apostle in the first chapter of his Epistle. "God is Love," he says in the fourth. And at the close of the fifth, his last utterance is "This is the true God and Eternal Life," spoken certainly of the Son, but as proving Him absolutely Divine.

These three words are symbols, drawn from beyond the moral domain, of realities lying within it. Light belongs to the material sphere, life to the animate creation, love to the realm of intelligence. All three belong originally to the natural world, but are here employed to set forth glories that utterly transcend it. They are not three revelations, but one revelation in a threefold form.

Light, here, is not omniscience. No exposition will satisfy the instincts of an ordinary reader, to say nothing of the demands of a careful exegete, which does not discover in this symbol a revelation of the holiness of God. It denotes the right in God, but the right considered as a mental conception, the self-derived standard of all Divine decrees and of all creaturely obedience.

Love denotes the same principle, as it calls forth the Divine complacency. The seat of that complacency is the affections; its object is—what? Not being as such, but holy being, human or Divine. Love in God is complacency in rectitude, wherever found. In the Epistle it is strictly limited to the communion of holy beings, which has its prototype in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. In the Gospel, the Divine love is extended to the world, but still only as the object of redemption. The complacency which actually delights in the actual image of God has two counterparts. Where the image of God is lost but capable of restoration, the counterpart to complacency is compassion. Where that image is lost beyond hope of recovery, the counterpart is unmixed displeasure. So long as evil character is not inseparably identified with the personality, so long pity for the sinner mitigates the wrath against the sin. But when that final union takes place, complacency in rectitude has its counterpart in a wrath that cannot be appeased. [2.]

Life, also, is holiness. But it is holiness considered as the actuating principle of the Divine Will in relation to beings possessed of a moral nature. What it is in relation to Absolute Deity we need not inquire. It has such a relation. "For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." These are words that express a

mystery into which mortals may not pry. It is the self-revealing God of redemption with whom we have to do. The moral significance of the term "life" in that discourse of our Lord from which we have just quoted, is unquestionable. Life in God is holiness determining its own reproduction. It is holiness issuing forth into the highest of all action, not simply the guardianship of its prerogatives nor the revelation of its glories, but the diffusion of its essence, the impartation of itself.

Throughout the Gospel of St. John the three terms are employed in the same connection, and each keeps its peculiar meaning. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The life is the holy principle communicated by Christ to the soul. It is only as the life is communicated that the light can be seen. Till then, "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." To as many as receive Him, a new birth is promised, that is, a new life. When that is imparted, then do we behold His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—of truth, that is, of holiness as light to them that sat in darkness, —of grace, that is, of holiness as compassionate love for those to whom the image of God should be restored. "The law was given by Moses," and it contained the standard, but all the "grace and truth" wrapped up in it "came by Jesus Christ." It would be profitable to pursue this line of thought through each succeeding chapter of the Gospel. But we must forbear.

I cannot dwell on the holiness of God as it exists within His own being. It has been said that infinity is applicable only to God's natural attributes, and that perfection, not infinity, should be ascribed to His moral glories. I cannot discuss

the distinction. God's moral perfection is the perfection of an Infinite Being. Omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, eternity, may perhaps be regarded as so many plummet-lines with which to gauge the profound of His holiness and prove its utter unfathomableness. Certainly they afford scope for its manifestations: they are its ministers that do its pleasure. But after all, they lend no glory to the glory that excelleth: their own is but an irradiation of the holiness of God.

That which is the bond of perfectness among the Divine attributes is the basis of harmony among the Divine Persons. Unity of essence is not enough: community of aim must be established. And this is testified in Holy Writ by the separate ascription of this primal glory to each of the Sacred Three.

We must consider the Divine holiness in relation to the creatures. Here two things come into view, probation, and with that the possibility of evil. Whether the possibility of evil should have for ever prohibited creation, is a question I shall only answer by what may look like a begging of it. God has Himself given the answer by actually creating. Certainly He foreknew that evil would exist. But He also foreknew the objection that would be founded on it. He foreknew that the objection would form a test of our character. He foreknew that some day the objection would be silenced, and His holiness vindicated before our eyes. Responsibility for evil is not made out till complicity in it is demonstrated.

A few words must be said on the origin of evil, a mystery we must encounter though we cannot hope to fathom it. Dr. Julius Müller has clearly shown that evil does not spring from creaturely limitation. If it does, all creatures are evil, and God has made them so. Nor can evil be derived from

matter or sense: that would still make God its Author. For the proof of both these positions we may refer to the angels. If evil were in matter only, they all must have stood. If in creaturely limitation only, they all must have fallen, or rather could never have stood at all. Nor is evil to be traced to the contrasts of individual life, the inequalities of society, the gradations of faculty and existence. This only shifts the blame from God in nature to God in providence. Thus, by successive exclusion of untenable hypotheses, we are shut up to the view that the birth of evil is to be connected with the self-originate actings of the responsible will. Our dignity constitutes our danger. The privileges of freedom involve its possible abuse.

The origin of evil points to its nature. It is a turning away from the right set before the finite will as the only lawful object of choice. The word lawful suggests law, and there is no department of our being exempt from it. Law implies a Lawgiver, and He is not far from every one of us. Our wills are our own, but the use of them is challenged at every point by Another. This does not destroy our freedom, because that other is the will of God. Definite command, influential direction, adequate support, suitable recompense, are provided without stint. In all this man, though fallen, owns the power of a present Deity. Nature and the supernatural here inextricably blend. The original glory—of man's knowledge of God—is not quite departed: the all-informing Spirit—restored in Christ—has not utterly forsaken the work of His own hands.

As then the conception of rectitude in God is absolutely underived, and there is no nature of things apart from His nature, so the same conception in man is traceable to the

same source, and if I may be allowed to say so, consciously traceable. I not only know that I know right from wrong, but I know who makes me know it. My consciousness of right and wrong is connected with and springs from my consciousness of God. Each sort of knowledge infers the other, and the priority does not belong to either. Both may be dim or both clear, and that in various degrees in various minds, but both are there. If I stretch out my hand to do evil, I know another Hand is stretched out to draw it back, or, if that be unavailing, to chastise my wilful spirit. If any ask how I know it, let him inquire of his own heart.

But here a difficulty may be started. Right, it may be said, was impersonated in the Divine Being: therefore it is easy to know it. Wrong is not so impersonated: how then can we know wrong? This difficulty is not so great as it appears. It supposes that evil is an entity, something that exists separately from the beings that commit it. Or else it supposes that we cannot know anything which does not stand in palpable embodiment before our senses. Neither of these propositions is true. Evil, like good, is only the quality of a moral being. And the knowledge of the one implies some knowledge of the other. The knowledge of opposites is one. I do not mean by this that I cannot know a given thing till I have its opposite before me, though the one may by the other be thrown into bolder relief. But, having a given thing before me, and knowing its limitations, I know something about everything else. I know it is not that. Thus I may know the right, the pure, the good, the happy. I know it in and through God. I know it is what He chooses, what He delights in, what He commands, what He will reward. I know it makes a heaven on earth, and

makes a heaven of heaven. Knowing all this about good, how can I but know something about evil? Whatever it is, it is what God abhors, what He keeps at an infinite distance, what He condemns when He commands the contrary, what He will punish according to its desert. And you say, all this is mere negative knowledge. Negative or positive, it is knowledge enough. Such knowledge in pure beings is, I grant, theoretical. O that our knowledge had never been anything else! The angels had no need of any other. Practical knowledge of evil, with them as with mankind, was dearly bought. It cast down a great company of the heavenly host. It has cast down every one of us. For the loss sustained through the acquisition of that knowledge, what compensation can there ever be? An incarnation cannot compensate it. The Incarnate One who said in one case, "O that thou hadst known," would have said in this, "O that thou hadst not known!" How much of evil must I know before I can know good? How much more sinful must I become, before I can be purged from my sin? God can bring good out of evil, you say. But He can bring greater good out of good. The mischief you and I have done grace never can undo. The depths of Satan we need not sound: we need sound but the deep things of God.

Evil was present as a conception to the Divine Being, side by side with the conception of good, the one the object of His aversion, the other of His choice. It was competent to Him to implant in the human mind an intuition and an aversion answering to His own, ready to manifest themselves as occasion might arise. It was not enough to give an inclination to good: a repugnance to evil must also be given to every creature formed in God's image. The Divine nature itself

was so constituted. Its propension toward good was not one-sided: the proper counterpart was abhorrence of evil. The sympathies of the Divine nature are not instincts that stultify intelligence. Affection for right on the one hand, balanced only by indifference to wrong on the other, would have been a characterless compromise, as indefensible as an equal affection or an equal indifference to both.

These features of the Divine Mind must have been communicated to the human. Nay more: there must have been instilled a certain dread of wrong, a certain apprehension of unknown danger or known pain attending it, which would furnish to the creature safeguards that the Creator did not need. Let no one object that this would necessitate the creation of a tendency to pain. That we find running down through every department of sentient existence. A tendency to pain, nay, an actual arrangement in certain circumstances to secure it, is seen in our sensations of hunger and thirst. No one complains of these vigilant guardians of our physical well-being. Without them, we should have been left to perish.

These remarks suggest a mode in which a more than negative knowledge of evil might be attained by Adam, without his being defiled by it or seeing it committed. Pain plays an important part in the probation of all moral brings. It did so with Adam in Paradise. All pain is not moral penalty, nor all pleasure moral reward. Adam was commanded not to touch the tree. This required that some energies should be restrained, and others called out, sometimes perhaps into an extraordinary activity. Both the exertion and the restraint would produce pain. But at the price of this pain, the pleasure was secured which alone

confers happiness, the pleasure of conscious lordship over himself and the creation, as well as of acceptableness to God. Thus the very conditions of holy living afforded him an experimental confirmation of his intuitions both of good and evil. He already knew pleasure and pain: both mingled in his lot, though the one vastly preponderated over the other. He had but to invert their proportions, he had but to ask himself what kind of life that would be in which a brief physical gratification should be the only set-off against the forfeiture of all other good, and he would have a practical and operative knowledge of wrong as distinguished from right. He would understand it to mean that which would reverse the conditions of his actual life. Thus he would have in his own experience that which would furnish a perpetual verification and reminder of the sentence, "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die." The mystery of the Fall remains unsolved, but it is hardly greater than the mystery of conversion. So long as man's eye was fixed on God, so long the pleasure of His service more than counterbalanced the pain its discipline inflicted. But as soon as man's eye was turned selfward, their relative proportions were changed. To solicitations from without and from beneath were now added solicitations from within. Then man became his own tempter, and self-seeking led the way to self-destruction.

From that day to this our nature has retained the bias thus impressed upon it. Every sin is a form of selfishness. Not that all regard to self is selfish. A true regard to self is an element of the loftiest perfection. The preservation of his personality from moral taint is man's first duty. But that duty involves submission to the will of God and dependence

on His strength. It is the seeking of self beyond these limits that can alone be called selfishness, and that constitutes the fault and corruption of our common human nature. But though the self-ward tendency be thus characteristic of all sinful action, it does not define its nature. It only specifies its direction. So on the other hand, in all holy action, the soul seeks after and tends toward God. His holy law, His sovereign pleasure, His gracious smile, command, and justly, our obedience. But they do not define the nature of it. Right and wrong, good and evil, are not the mere negations of each other. They are both positive and ultimate, but opposed and incompatible, principles. Each has its own laws, and works its own issues. And to one or other of these sovereignties we every day bow down.

Probation, then, involves the possible appearance of evil. The relation of a Creator to His creatures sets the holiness of God in a new light. As a holy Being, God must have regard to His purpose in creating them, viz., the manifestation of His moral glory. They can only answer this end as He instructs them, sustains them, directs them. "God with us" is a truth and a fact essential alike to our dignity and our existence. In the ever-present God, the abstract idea of holiness is clothed with a living interest and a solemn authority which make credible the realisation of it in ourselves. How then, it may be asked, shall the Divine Being manifest His will to His creatures? There are only two ways. One is by establishing in their nature the same connection between the right and the happy which obtains in His own. The other is by superadding manifestations of His approval during probation and after it. As a necessary counterpart, He must also establish a similar connection

between sin and misery, and superadd manifestations of displeasure against sin. Thus, as the desire to reveal and diffuse His moral glory prompts the Most High to become a Creator, so, becoming a Creator, the same principle compels Him to put on the character of a Sovereign and a Judge. His right to assume such prerogatives springs jointly from His relations to us as our Author and End.

As Sovereign and Judge of creatures undergoing probation, God is called in Scripture, not "holy," but "righteous." The two words do not denote different perfections, but different aspects of the same perfection. It is not enough to say that "holy" denotes the principle and "righteous" the manifestation, though that is a part of the truth. Nor is it enough to say that God is holy as a Person and righteous as a Governor, though this is also true. A collation of the passages in which each occurs, would, I think, point to a further distinction. "Righteous" or "just" denotes both the principle and its manifestations as concerned with the interests of probation, while "holy" transcends probation, although in so far as its ends are being answered, it may also be said to pervade it. In other words, it would be correct to speak of God as the Holy One in the solitude of His eternal self-existence, and also in the fellowship He maintains with His own both in this world and the next. But to express His relation to transgressors, or to men generally, considered as those whose destiny is yet to be decided, Scripture does not employ the term "holy," but "righteous." The attitude of God's holiness toward man's sin is negative only. "Whither I go, ye cannot come." In virtue of it God hides His face from transgressors, keeps them at a distance, denies to them the privileges of communion. The attitude of God's justice is

positive. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

From this distinction some important consequences flow. There is a great difference between the views taken of the Divine Being by sinners and saints respectively. Sinners may know God as righteous: they do not love Him as holy. Like the fallen beings they are in bondage to, they may believe, but it is only God's threatenings, and, believing, they tremble. The saints love God as holy. They see the more gracious aspect of this supreme perfection. Believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, though their joy is still mixed with trembling. Both saints and sinners have a fear of God. But in the one it is the guilty apprehension of a judgment too terrible to be borne. In the other it is the gracious apprehension of a glory too great to be conceived. The contempt which evil men express for holiness as the basis of communion between God and His creatures is the offspring of wilful ignorance. Its blessedness seems unsubstantial: its restraint looks like bondage: its solemnity is thought to be sadness. Yet the very same perfection, ever and anon revealed in its more awful forms, fills the proud cavillers with abject dread. So, often, from the majesty of God's righteous judgments men learn the preciousness of His holy love.

These observations will prepare us for the consideration of holiness as communicated to man in redemption. And here let me say that though holiness still means rectitude, it is rectitude regarded under a certain relation. The moralist speaks of rectitude, but not, unless he be a Christian moralist, of righteousness. He deals with man as he finds him, and may seek to rise from man to God. The theologian appeals

in the first place to revelation, and descends from God to man. He deals with rectitude as matter of definite relations between God and man, as something Divinely required and Divinely produced. We should not go far wrong if we were to define holiness in man as covenant-righteousness.

We must approach the subject by a further reference to the terminology of Scripture. The terminology of Redemption is abundant and varied. All sorts of figures are employed to set it forth. In some there is a significant duality, expressing the strife of antagonistic forces. Servitude and freedom, health and sickness, light and darkness, life and death, love and enmity, are samples. Figures are taken from the school, the field, the fold, the mart, the road, the racecourse, the palace, the feast, the marriage ceremony, the succession of day and night, the varieties of natural productions, the beginning and end of all things.

But there are three great classes of terms with which we are all familiar, and which Dr. Pope, in that great work, his recently published Compendium, has expounded with much felicity. These terms are derived from the Court, the Temple, and the Household respectively. Of these, the first and third are borrowed from arrangements natural and human. In the second, the true temple of God in the heavens is shadowed forth by the holy places of the Mosaic Institute: here, therefore, we may be said to "compare spiritual things with spiritual."

Each of the three has its leading characteristic. In the court it is righteousness; in the temple, sanctification; in the household, sonship. Each of these has a twofold application, as it denotes an adjustment of relations between God and man, and as it denotes a rectification of the moral nature.

There is an imputed and an imparted righteousness (by which I do not mean that Christ's righteousness is imputed): the former is called justification, the latter has no name distinct from righteousness as used in Romans viii. 4. There is an imputed and an imparted sanctification, not distinguished by different names. There is an imputed and an imparted sonship, and here the terminology is complete, the one being called adoption and the other regeneration. Why the terminology should be complete in the third, and not in the other two, is obvious. In an earthly household, both blessings find representative symbols in actual events. In human birth there commences a new life, in human adoption a new relationship. In the old Roman days the two were frequently united in the same person. The father possessed the power of life and death over his family: the new-born child was laid at his feet: if it pleased him, he adopted it; if not, he cast it out. So much for the household. It is otherwise with the court. In no human tribunal is there anything corresponding to the change of character which in the Divine court accompanies justification, while justification itself is but imperfectly pictured in a condemned criminal's discharge. The exaction upon another of the stern demands of law has no place in human legislation or administration. So also with regard to the temple. In the Mosaic ritual—which we must here distinguish from the Mosaic dispensation—the sanctification of the worshipper was purely relative, often purely physical and ceremonial, not involving in itself a change of moral relations with God, though always pointing to that.

In fact, the distinct origin of these several terms is, in our ordinary use of them, very much overlooked. One term

may be said to be selected from each of the three classes to denote the processes of salvation—justification to denote the change in our relations to God wrought at our conversion, regeneration to denote the change in our moral nature wrought at our conversion, and sanctification to denote the continual cleansing which ensues thereupon. To these may be added entire sanctification, to denote the final extinction of inbred sin in which some churches believe, and ours among the number. Holiness is a term that covers the whole ground, and may be taken to denote either the whole estate of Christian privileges, or the distinctive and preeminent characteristic of renewed human nature, or the process by which it is brought into being. Sometimes, but improperly, the name is restricted to the entirely sanctified state. Before passing from the terminology, a few additional remarks may be made.

The court belongs to probation. Its last verdict is given at the judgment-day. The issues of its decisions extend through eternity: the decisions themselves are pronounced in time, or at the meeting-point of time and eternity. The throne remains, but not as a judgment-seat. The Monarch still sits upon it, but not as a Judge. It is otherwise with the temple and the household. In these the idea of a test distinguishing between two classes of persons, the accepted and the condemned, can hardly be said to exist. The distinction between holy and profane does not correspond to it. Both the righteous and the wicked come before the court. But the profane do not enter the temple. Neither do the aliens enter the house, only the children. Nevertheless, putting the monarch in the place of the judge, we may say that these three symbols of Redemption, like the graces they enshrine,

abide for ever. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him," that is, worship Him, "day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell," shall tabernacle, "among them."

In each of these three we see blended the threefold glory of the Divine holiness, life, light, and love, with a predominance of one in each. In the court, the light, or standard of holiness, is seen in the Divine law; love is manifested in the grace by which our Surety redeems us from its curse; and life is communicated or withheld as we accept or reject His aid. Yet the law, that is, the light, is the ruling idea. In the temple, the light is the Deity Himself, revealed by the sanctifying Spirit, the Shekinah that rests upon the mercy-seat. Both this revelation and the adoring contemplation of it are pervaded by the complacency of love. And the growing resemblance of the worshippers to the Object of their worship is spiritual and eternal life. But the complacent adoration is the chief idea. That which answers in the house to the law of the court and the glory of the temple is the Father's image stamped upon His child. There is no need to speak of the love which springs up between Him who begets and him who is begotten, nor of life as here preeminently the gift of God. The three blend in the new birth, but life is the ruling idea.

My main business will now be to expound the doctrine of entire sanctification, a doctrine that distinguishes us as Methodists from some other branches of the universal Church. There are three aspects under which we may consider it. The first is taken from the court, and represents it as a perfect obedience to the law of God. The second from the temple: it is perfect love to God and man. The third from the household: it is the perfect image of God in the soul,

involving the extermination of the last remains of sin. We must guard against the supposition that these are successive stages of holiness: they are but three different presentations of the same grace, each requiring as its complements the other two. We will consider them in the reverse order.

Let us begin with the perfect image of God in the soul. Our starting-point must be the new birth, or rather original sin. Our original natural constitution, however injured by the Fall, is not lost. Man's conscious energies appear in the three forms of intelligence, feeling, and will and desire. They are the workings of faculties which themselves remain in unconsciousness. The hidden preparedness for conscious activity is what is termed the constitution. There is a moral constitution as well, injured but not destroyed by the Fall. In virtue of this, man knows right and wrong, and anticipates and experiences happiness or unhappiness as the result of moral action. This is independent of his character and choice. None are without it, though in vigour and sensibility it varies infinitely. Here, likewise, the conscious energies are the outcome of the unconscious constitution.

Our natural corruption lies in a tendency from or against the God we know. From the Creation man has an innate knowledge of God, from the Fall an innate aversion to Him. We prefer the evil He condemns to the good He approves, not because it is evil, but though it is evil. His will counts for nothing beside ours. We know Him, and yet we know Him not. We know Him afar off, though He is very nigh. Our best Friend we count our worst foe.

Hence it is easy to see how the evil nature works. Evil presents itself under the appearance of good. Some object is placed before the mind, appealing to some

power within us. The power is one that God has given: therefore its exercise cannot be always sinful. The object is one that God has created: therefore its existence need not be to us the occasion of sin. The sin is not in the power within, nor in the object without, but in the way in which we exert the power on the object. In the sight of a present God, we have exerted the energies He has given us in a direction contrary to His will. We have preferred another object—no matter what—to Himself. Whichever of the commandments we have broken, we have also broken the first. We have said the creatures could give us a pleasure that God Himself could neither give nor take away. Thus we hoodwink our intelligence, and are false: we choose a lesser good instead of a greater, and are foolish: we prefer our will to God's, and are wicked.

Sin is thus always an act of will. But what is sinfulness? This is the preparedness to perform such an act of will. The power that consciously sins is the will. The name sometimes used in Scripture to denote the abiding seat and source of sin is the heart. And it lies in unconsciousness. This is equally true of our nature as sinful and as renewed. "The heart is deceitful above all things: who can know it?" Compare with this St. Peter's "hidden man of the heart." In our fallen nature, a secret bias exists toward evil of every form. It is unchangeable, except by Divine grace. The nature lies deeper than the will. Freewill in a moral being is real, but not absolute. His nature influences him. The evil man is free within the limits of evil: the good man free within the limits of good. Neither can pass those limits without violence done to himself: in the former case the holy violence of the Spirit of God, when we admit Him to our hearts: in the

latter, the unholy violence of the spirit of evil, when we fail to resist him. Except in the crisis of the new birth, our position is one, not of immobility, but of stable equilibrium.

The bondage of sin and death is never more acutely felt than when endeavours are made to throw it off. How agonising is the struggle depicted by St. Paul in the seventh chapter of the Romans! Here the work of regeneration is clearly seen in process of accomplishment, through the application of the law to the conscious understanding, and the entrance of the Spirit into the unconscious heart. The struggle is fierce between the soul as consciously persuaded of the claims of the truth and the same soul as swayed by forces emerging from the unconscious depths within. A law from above, acknowledged to be good, and a law from within, acknowledged to be evil, contend together for the mastery, and between the combatants the man himself is as if rent asunder. To say that he vacillates in his determinations is to understate the matter: he is as if actuated by a double personality, which pulls both ways at once. As a first result of the joint operation of the law and the Spirit, the soul is convinced that in obeying the law of sin it has not been true to its original constitution. The personal "I" begins to hearken to the heavenly Visitant, and to yield His stern demand. Receiving from Him strength for the purpose, vouchsafed through the merits of Christ, the self is empowered to surrender its all to Him, and to commit to Him the subjugation of its nature. The rage of sin is defied, the power of sin is broken. The old tendencies of the nature still oppose the new, but the latter effectually assert themselves. The personality is no longer divided. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law

of sin and death." Incentives to evil still seek to fascinate, and there remains that within which is ready to respond to them. But the soul need not own the fascination. It is not wholly unhampered in its movements; some of its energy is lost in an intestine strife that will one day come to an end. But the soul is freed from the power, though not from the taint, of evil. Sin thus remains in the regenerate.

Nearly all acknowledge that it does remain, vanquished but not destroyed. But if we maintain that an utter destruction eventually takes place, let no one suppose that we thereby dishonour the new birth. It does not follow that that is a superficial change, because it is not complete. As a change, it is the greatest that can take place. The change from grace to glory is not so great as the change from sin to grace. Indeed, it ought not to be thought impossible with God to make the first stamp the final one. How else can we believe in death-bed conversions, including that of the thief whose death-bed was a cross?

That this is not God's ordinary method is proved by St. Paul, and confirmed by his and our experience. He speaks of the evil in our hearts in various ways. Sometimes he speaks of it as a whole, a mass of corruption, which he calls "the flesh," not thereby meaning what is physical, but naming the evil principle from the sphere in which it chiefly works. At other times he speaks of particular features, "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Sometimes he speaks of the whole and the parts as together forming one organism, "the body of sin" and its "members," neither term denoting what is physical, but the corruption which may or may not connect itself therewith. Sometimes he invests it with vitality. We are to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts."

But there is a point at which he stops. Vitality he does ascribe to corruption: personality he does not. In repentance there seemed almost a double personality within us: after regeneration there is but one. Two natures there are within us, an evil and a good: but there is only one person, and that is identified with the better nature, not the worse. The evil nature in the regenerate is never called the old man. There is a passage in the Ephesians which seems to do so. "That ye put off as concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." These words refer to a past experience, realised when they "so learned Christ," not to a future yet to come to pass. This is confirmed by the parallel passage in the Colossians, "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man."

But if the Apostle halts in his description of sin as remaining in the regenerate, he does not halt in his description of its ultimate destination. He knows nothing of any gracious purpose that can be served by the lack of grace. Out of this evil he nowhere suggests the evolution of good. "Away with it," he cries, "away with it: crucify it, crucify it." And lest that strong term should admit a possible remainder of vitality, he uses a yet stronger: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," a reference still to the dying of the Lord Jesus, enjoining an extinction of our carnal life as complete as the extinction of His natural life upon the cross.

Notwithstanding this, many deny the possibility of what the Apostle so strenuously asserts. Let us look a little more closely into the workings of sin in the heart.

How does the bias to evil betray itself? It is seen in the upspringing under temptation of a certain instinctive desire for the object which temptation presents. Desire resembles will in that it is an urgency to action, but it lacks an element that will contains, viz., the intelligent consideration and recognition of the quality of the act it is invited to perform. The upspringing of a desire for a wrong object, or the inordinate force of a desire for a right one, is the proof of remaining depravity. But there is no actual sin, that is, no guilt, unless the desire be indulged. The desire may be obeyed blindly: in this case, will abdicates its functions. That does not make the act less an act of sin. Again, the desire may be gradually yielded to, through the will suffering the attention to be fixed on an object from which it ought to be called off. Or the desire may be deliberately chosen and persevered in, and this is the presumptuous sin, never committed without a ruinous loss of spiritual strength. The occasional appearance of such desires, whether yielded to or not, proves a lingering bias to evil. This bias is admittedly controllable. On what grounds is it maintained that it cannot be destroyed?

The bias to evil is not a sort of substance embedded in the soul, to be dislodged by some process of spiritual surgery. There are no materialistic analogies that can adequately describe either the dominion or the destruction of evil. What sinful desires are there, which are not perversions of innocent ones? Pride is exaggerated self-respect. Vanity is excessive love of approbation. Covetousness is inordinate desire of acquisition. Hatred is a natural principle, whose proper object is moral evil. Bodily appetites become lusts only when they spurn the bounds imposed by the revealed

will of God. Every one admits that a continual victory may be gained over every form of evil desire as it arises. Every one admits that, as a result of continual victory, there is a constant development of spiritual life. What necessity is there, then, that any moral obliquity should remain? Why must the finishing touch be continually postponed? Why may not the soul become as tractable an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God, as the body in locomotion is of the soul?

The line of defence must be, either that there is some particular form of evil in each breast that cannot be uprooted, or else that the general tendency to evil is thus ineradicable. If the former, we must ask whether it is some one particular desire, common to all men, that cannot be destroyed, and then we must ask which it is. If pride, why must we be clothed with humility? If anger, why are the angry in danger of the judgment? If not common to all men, each must have his own easily besetting sin. And then, how is it that this very sin is specially prohibited, instead of specially excused? But if it be said the evil tendency is general only, this can only differ from the other statement on the supposition that it is a general tendency which is never in danger of appearing in any particular forms. And that is no tendency at all.

The opinion that sin is ineradicable in this life is associated among Protestants with a belief in its destruction at the moment of dissolution. This savours of the theory of the essential evil of matter. It reflects on the goodness or power of the Creator, invalidates the mission of the Redeemer, and makes even the work of the quickening Spirit in the morning of the resurrection a retrogression instead of an advance.

Some who hold this theory state plainly that the spirit within us is insusceptible of sin, save through its alliance with the flesh, that is, the body. This is in plain contradiction of Scripture, which clearly distinguishes filthiness of the flesh from filthiness of the spirit. Moreover, this would leave unexplained the circumstance that Christians are frequently overcome by sins of the spirit long after sins of the flesh have ceased to trouble and defile.

An objection is sometimes grounded on the fact that probation is continued after perfection is attained. Even supposing every sinful desire to cease, some think we should say sin is suspended, rather than destroyed. Is not the work supernatural? Does not its continuance depend on the grace of the Spirit and the faith of the soul? Will not the evil principle, on the failure of these conditions, make its appearance again? And, finally, does not this prove that evil was only suppressed, not slain? All these questions I answer in the affirmative, except the last for which they pave the way. Continual dependence on the Divine Being and a continual reinforcement of Divine strength are conditions of spiritual life wherever found, and whether probation be ended or or not. However God may ratify His creatures' choice when they pass the limits of probation, He will never render them independent of Himself.

Let us again call in philosophy as a witness. It deals with right and wrong, good and evil, though not under the forms of holiness and sin. It may claim, therefore, to be a competent witness, though not an authoritative judge. It can furnish no argument for the indestructibility of evil, if once there be conceded the ascendency of good. It teaches the indivisibility of the personal subject, and with that the

tendency of all habits—mental, moral, and physical—to conform to a certain unity of type. A multiplicity of principles is its abhorrence, where a true simplicity can be maintained. And this is no arbitrary maxim, but one that is rooted in our mental constitution. It would be contrary to all that has ever been known of the mind to assert that in our moral constitution, so inextricably interwoven with the mental, a duality of principles is necessary, of principles too that are neither coordinate in jurisdiction nor harmonious in operation, but mutually inconsistent and opposed. Who does not know the agony of a mind held in suspense, unable to decide how to act, when life and death are hanging on the venture? And this where principles are clear enough, and only wisdom to apply them may be wanting. How much greater the agony when not the application but the principle is doubtful, when not the principle even, but the power to act upon it is denied me, when my strongest conscious resolves are liable to be frustrated by an inward and secret irresolution, when in every encounter with the enemy without I find another enemy lurking within, ready to deliver me into his hands, when in the very moment I draw out my weapon paralysis strikes down the arm that wields it, though eternal life and eternal death be staked upon the issue? Our moral consciousness condemns the evil that men plead for, and tells us, if its destruction is impossible, it ought not to be. Only the impossible purity can satisfy us. Only the impossible offering can ever be perfectly acceptable to God.

From these reasonings let us turn to the oracles of God. In doing so, let us remember that it is not particular features only that must guide us, though these are important, but the general texture and complexion of the whole. This is a sub-

ject on which not only do both Testaments agree, but the agreement is conspicuous and obtrusive. Moral perfection is the goal to which each hurries us forward with resistless zeal. Whatever advantages the later dispensation may have over the earlier in the unfolding of the Divine purpose in Christ, the Divine holiness shines forth in both with almost equal splendour. If the men of the earliest ages were nearer to the Fall, so were they nearer to primeval revelation. The apparently inferior morality of the patriarchs must not obscure the testimony of the eleventh of Hebrews to their wonder-working faith. The ceremonial nature of the Levitical economy must not blind us to that which was the aim, and for many the issue, of its multiplied enactments. The fiery wrath of the imprecatory psalms must not be construed into personal revenge. They answer in the Old Testament to the denunciations of the Pharisees in the New. Nor must we misinterpret the fact that in the Corinthians the Apostle Paul calls the Mosaic economy the ministration of death and of condemnation, and his own the ministration of righteousness. Whatever that may prove as to the workings of the two, it identifies their moral characteristics, since condemnation and righteousness are correlative terms. Life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, were the same with Moses as with Christ.

If this be true of the Old Testament as a whole, we shall not undervalue its specific utterances. We shall understand what Moses meant when he promised to Israel the inward circumcision; what David meant when he prayed for the creation of a clean heart; what Isaiah meant when he described the way of holiness; what Jeremiah meant by the new covenant and the law in the inward parts; what Ezekiel

meant by a promise too glorious not to be quoted in full—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them."

To quote New Testament teachings on this subject would almost require us to transcribe the whole. The spirit of prophecy, pent up since Malachi, bursts forth again in the father of the Baptist and in the mother of our Lord. The "mercy" which the latter celebrates is explained by the former to be "that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." The name given to the Deliverer is "Jesus," because "He shall save His people from their sins." The Baptist announces a greater Baptiser, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." When He comes, He fulfils His mission. His first works celebrate at Cana the marriage of heaven and earth, and at Jerusalem the cleansing of the Temple preparatory thereto. His first words on the Mount proclaim the beatitudes as the elements of a righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees and resembles the perfection of the Father in heaven. His first words in private promise a second birth which is the direct antithesis of the first, promise the gift of water that shall for ever quench the thirst of those who drink it, promise a power to worship God in spirit and in truth. His miracles put the stamp of perfectness upon the blessings which they typify, no less than

on the blessings they impart. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up," and thus, through each striking symbol of a perfect salvation, "the poor," to whom actions speak louder than words, "have the Gospel preached to them." The parables tell the same tale. Let the first speak for all. The various fortunes of the good seed are skilfully depicted, but the soil, not the seed, is blamed for the want of success. A suitable reception is followed by a marvellous fertility, and the powers of nature are exaggerated to express the abounding of grace.

The time would fail us to trace the apostolic teaching. Contrast, as an example, the close of the eighth of Romans with the close of the seventh. See how in the Corinthians the apostle borrows the promises of the Old Testament to buttress the faith of the New, and exhorts us, "having these promises, to perfect holiness in the fear of God." The same holiness is enjoined in the Hebrews, with the warning that without it "no man shall see the Lord." The prayers of St. Paul are all prayers for the perfection of the church in its individual members, no less than in its corporate capacity. Take the great Thessalonian prayer for instance. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." There is a twofold whole here spoken of, the one denoting the pervasiveness and the other the perfection of the process, while the name under which the Sanctifier is invoked imports the issue of His working, the great event for which it must prepare guarantees the genuineness of the procedure, and the final

promise, pledging the faithfulness of God, stamps the human petition as an oracle Divine. A blessed comment of the apostle on his own but newly uttered counsel, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

St. Peter in his teaching coincides with St. Paul. He too remembers Leviticus. "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is not quoted in a judaizing sense. He too invokes the God of all grace by the eternal glory to which He hath called us, and by the dignity of Him who has revealed it, Christ Jesus, yea, and by the suffering through which we must pass to it, to make us perfect, using every term that a wise master-builder could think of to convey his meaning—"stablish," make firm in position, "strengthen," make solid in structure, "settle you," make sure your foundation in Christ. And James, that stern teacher of righteousness, that sharp reprover of sins of omission, who knows that the offender in one point is guilty of all, knows also of a man who keeps all in keeping one, "If any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Of John there is no need to speak, who tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

These words, and many more like them which we will quote by and bye, are found in a Book that paints sin in darker colours than heathen moralists ever dared employ. The tones in which they speak about our malady are almost as halting and doubtful as those in which they promise a cure. Our ruin is as great a puzzle to them as our redemption. They see the two streams of good and evil ever mixing, but fail to trace them to their several fountain-heads. Apart from revelation, the moral aspects of the race offer insoluble problems. A degeneracy that threatens to destroy

social order mysteriously gives place to a renewal that restores the equilibrium again. If the foundation be bad, how is it the fabric does not perish? If good, whence the necessity of this continual repair? The human mind cannot read aright the riddle of its own existence, and it is afraid to face the whole truth. [1.]

Scripture alone reveals the full extent of our depravity, and it is ever faithful to the facts. The picture it presents is appalling. It is not departure from God only it charges on us, but defiance of Him: not the marred image of God it mourns over, but the substituted image of His foe. It is not folly it condemns us for, not weakness, not ignorance, though all these be there. It is a folly we prefer to wisdom, a weakness that will not be clothed with strength, an ignorance that is content to be blinded by the light. It is conspiracy against the order of the universe. It is complicity with the Prince of Darkness, and every foul fiend that does his bidding. It is the utter confusion and identity of heaven and earth and hell. All this we get from the Bible. And our guilt is reflected in our doom. If here its teachings ended, we should sink into despair. Half measures would be fatal. A plague so virulent demands extermination: for gangrene so loathsome, cautery is the only cure. The two questions are equally momentous, Can human nature be indeed thus deeply tainted, and, if so, can its iniquity be purged? Hear both answered from the mouth of Him that hangs upon the tree. Hear the lament from the lips of the forsaken One: hear also the triumphant "It is finished." See the darkness gather round the Victim of wrath: see it roll away again from the Vanquisher of it. Ask what causes brought on such a conflict. Ask what effects shall flow from

such a victory. And let the inspired explanation suffice you, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The doctrine of the cross is the Gospel that can alone frame our conversation, and the doctrine of the cross is the Gospel that our conversation must adorn.

Hitherto we have spoken of the restoration of the Divine image, and mainly in its negative aspect as involving the utter destruction of sin, a work wrought in the unconscious depths of the heart. We come now to the conscious communion of the soul with God that springs from union with Him, the love that flowers on this tree of life. Love as the test of purity, that is our next consideration. This suggests the question, "What is love?" I would define it to be for man complacency in God as the standard of rectitude. This makes love manifest itself in the form of emotion. But let it be understood what emotion. It is not a transient spasm of sensibility that passes away and leaves no trace. It is not a galvanic contortion artificially induced in the face of the dead. It is a fountain that springs from a hidden source, and turns the desert into the garden of the Lord.

Some would repress religious emotion, as if it were so much weakness. Emotion is only a weakness when it refuses legitimate restraint. Like fire, its frequent symbol, it is a good servant, but a bad master. And a deficiency is as bad as an excess. We reprobate the irritability which is lashed into frenzy by the slightest word. But we also reprobate the insensibility which can gaze on scenes of horror or of beauty and remain unmoved. If there are no virtuous affections, neither are there any vicious ones. John Stuart Mill would comfort us for his supposed destruction of the foundations of

belief, by assigning to religion "the whole domain of emotion." We cannot relax our hold on either, for religion addresses the whole man. The love we speak of lacks neither a rational basis nor a rational exercise, nor does it disdain a rational control. The natural capacity for feeling is supernaturally quickened and enlarged. The result is a spiritual grace, which is one of the most potent forces of the heavenly kingdom. It is neither purely human, nor purely superhuman: the Christian graces are Divine-human, like the person of our Lord. This love is the love of God as the standard of moral perfection. It is not the love of God simply as the Infinite Being. I cannot adore His natural perfection still I know something of the ends they subserve. It is not the love of God as the Author of all that is, not even as my Creator, Governor, and Judge. Before I can reverence Him in these relationships, I need to be assured of His purpose in assuming them. The revelation of His moral glory floods the infinitude of His being and of His universe with light. [2.]

The love that adores the Divine Majesty is not contemplative merely. Admiration of an ideal excellence may be accompanied by apprehension of a real wrath. The Divine glory is not fully revealed except to those to whom it is imparted. God offers Himself to my whole being, and demands my whole being in return. Contemplation cannot rise into communion till the consecration He requires is complete. But when every power is surrendered to His service, how unspeakable is the delight. The union is so intimate that the reality of the communion cannot be denied. God incarnate is the voucher for its genuineness. His promises have traced both the conditions and the constituents of it. His life

exhibited its beauty and power. His sufferings tell the value that He puts on its enjoyment. His death is our title to its privileges, and the warrant for our boldness in embracing them. Through the new and living way, that is to say, His flesh, we enter the holiest of all. With our Highpriest at our right hand, we advance to the mercy-seat, and behold it sprinkled with His blood. The Shekinah glows between the Cherubim, and we are not consumed by its blaze. Here only, in the presence chamber of the Deity, we find an Object on whom we may lavish our hearts' best affection, without the reproach of enthusiasm and without the guilt of idolatry. With such offering God is well pleased. His love mourned our wanderings: now it welcomes our return. His relentings are kindled; His wrath is assuaged. Compassion is turned into complacency. The Divine majesty shines forth in condescension. The resources of omnipotence are laid at our feet. And our Highpriest's pleading is effectual: we share His glory, as He our humiliation. His portion is given us, "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."

Love is not all pleasure, however, even in the soul that drinks its fill of it. "Now is My soul troubled" are words the Sinless One spoke as He entered the cloud of His passion, and which might have been uttered before. Our capacity for serving Him ever falls short of our aim. The desire unsatisfied is a pain, not the pain of discord, but of conscious inadequacy. But desire stimulates exertion, and exertion brings with it development, and development has its recompense in satisfaction, and so desire issues in delight. And the alternation of desire and delight are the conditions of the soul's progress, even when made perfect in love.

Is there any need to quote testimonies to the existence of

this love? Its voice is clear and unmistakable. From the elder Testament it greets us, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." So also from the pages of the New. "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In the presence of testimonies like these, and of many many more of which these are but samples, it is unnecessary to defend fellowship with God from the charge of transcendentalism. A heavenly realism let us call it, rather. Such a charge can only arise from one of two causes. It may be due to the deep ungodliness of the unregenerate heart, which rejoices to think God unknowable, and stigmatises all communion with Him as a morbid self-communion. Our reply must be the counter charge of atheism. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Or it may be due to a fear lest fellowship with God should devitalise our fellowship with man. A not altogether unnecessary fear. There are those who seek to replenish their hearts from the fountain of life, but forget to make them fountains in their turn. Stagnant waters exhale malaria. The hoarded manna bred worms. This is not the type of love Divine.

We vindicate the claims of the first table by honouring those of the second. "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." He loves the Father in the children, loves His image in their souls. As this love is identical in nature with love to God, it is needless to say that it must be subordinated to it. The love enjoined by the second great commandment cannot be otherwise than

subordinate to the love enjoined by the first. Christian charity is spoken of in Scripture as a sort of mediate love of God. It is not God apart from the universe that we must love, not God and the universe separately, but God in and through the universe, though not in a pantheistic sense. The universe must be loved for God's sake, and God for the good of the universe.

The universe includes not only the actual members of the spiritual family, but the prodigals that are to be restored. Gratitude is essentially imitative, and prompts us to impart to those who lack them benefits of which the Giver has no need. Love here, therefore, is not all pleasure. The degradation of the race must move pity like that which wept over Jerusalem. Its misery must open a fountain of compassion like that which overflowed at the grave of Lazarus. No human calamity can ever be viewed with indifference: no crime even should expose the perpetrator of it to a wholly unmitigated contempt. So long as the image of God may be restored, so long even the death-doomed criminal claims succour from those whom grace only has made to differ. Thus, if this love has its joys in the communion of saints, it has its griefs for a world lying in wickedness. Yet these are not without their solace, since charity hides a multitude of sins.

Let us not forget one member of the family for whom we are chiefly responsible, and whom we must love among the rest. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." There is no "altruism" taught in that. The old perversion was bad enough, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy." The new perversion is worse, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thyself." True self-love is not selfishness. The original instinct, like all others, is neither

moral nor immoral, but unmoral. When does it become selfish? Some would say, when it interferes with the happiness of others. But, to say nothing of the ambiguity of the term happiness, it is plain that the state of things described as interference is one that itself requires to be defined. Self-love becomes selfish when pleasure, satisfaction, what is miscalled happiness, is sought without subordination to our highest interests as defined by the will of God. When I love God supremely, then first do I truly love myself. I am to love God's image everywhere: therefore I must love it in my own soul. And as the love of the neighbour is one with the love of God, so true self-love is one with both. I may need much direction as to the proportion of thought, time and attention to be allotted to each object in this wondrous trinity, but the principles themselves are not opposed. In caring for my own soul's welfare, I am preparing an instrument to promote the welfare of others: in labouring for my neighbour's good, I am still permitted, nay, bound, to have "respect unto the recompense of the reward."

The satisfaction derived from the consciousness of answering the ends of being and securing the favour of God, is a pleasure which is opposed to selfishness in every form, and of which we need never be defrauded. Of all pleasures, this is the most noble, and it puts the crown upon the rest.

This love is, therefore, true blessedness. Happiness we might have said, but the word is not strong enough. It omits from its connotation the essential element of a Divine appointment. To us, indeed, as its name indicates, happiness often comes as a surprise, with more of accident in it than purpose. But it is none the less "the counsel of His will." Complacency in the Divine purity, original and reflected,

makes up the sum of possible bliss. It is not an idle, enervating habit of soul. It begins in contemplation, steadfast and prolonged, itself sometimes an arduous employment. It issues in activity, benevolent and fruitful, and sets the faculties at work to find out modes of operation.

The graces of the Spirit are phases of the all-pervading principle of holy love. Joy is the overflow of its satisfaction in God, in its own heritage, or in that of His ransomed family. Peace is the concord, amid vast diversity, of these three relationships. Longsuffering is the magnanimity or large-mindedness which keeps the profit of men in view, in spite of their indifference or enmity. Gentleness is the same disposition, seeking its gracious ends by gracious means. Goodness is the same love, pouring itself forth in acts of thoughtful benevolence, whether to men's bodies or men's souls. Fidelity is the same love, refusing to be seduced from its course by the bait of self-advantage. Meekness is the same love, enduring personal slights without a murmur. And temperance is the same love, weaning itself from the delights of sense that it may be girded with strength for its toil.

All these are outbursts of the love which many waters cannot quench. They are human feelings transfigured into Divine graces by the Spirit of the Lord. They are parts of the plan of our spiritual life, as its Author intends it to be worked out, not in the solitude of the desert amid rapt communings with Himself, but in this present evil world, amid its crushing burdens and fiery tribulations, amid the misrepresentations of the malicious and the contempt of the proud, amid disappointments, vexations and griefs innumerable, the rupture of earthly ties and the parting of body and soul. In whomsoever these graces flourish, they shall be blessed indeed.

Have we made the scope of this benevolence too narrow? Some would say we have. Not only narrow in scope, but baseless in principle, visionary in aim, barren in practical results. We are not concerned now to relay the foundations of our faith. We have no misgivings, either as to our starting-point or as to our goal. Our objection to our adversaries is that they do not profess to have either. See how with superfluous zeal they point us to the great seething mass of human misery, and invite us to begin a work Christianity has always been endeavouring to do. "Deal your bread," say they, "to the hungry, give water to the thirsty, bring light to the minds of the ignorant, and comfort to the homes of the destitute: do more for the life that now is, and talk less of the life that is to come." All they would have us do we have done, and, by the grace of God, will do still. For so we are commanded. But the other we dare not leave undone. That also is matter of command. As we survey the multitudes of the human race, we cannot refrain from asking, "Whence came they, and whither do they go?" We cannot but accept God's answer. We cannot but work for the future He depicts to us, full as it is of glorious hope. This does not set aside the aims of philanthropy: it rather embraces and exalts them. The cup of cold water is not less refreshing because given in the name of a disciple, nor the giver less disinterested because he expects the disciple's reward. And the hollow benevolence of the man who says, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," yet gives not those things which are needful—what satire can expose it like the withering rebuke, "How dwelleth the love of God in him?" The humanitarian benevolence is sporadic in its efforts, short-sighted in its aim, sentimental in its enthusiasm, emasculating

in its effects. But Christian charity maintains unity of principle amid vast variety of operation. She is not satisfied with saying, "I will devise means to make childhood more joyous and old age more comfortable, I will share the burdens of the workers of society, I will promote works of healing and consolation, I will beautify man's surroundings, cover his slag-heaps with verdure, reclaim the waste places of civilisation, and deck with glory and beauty his life of threescore years and ten." All this true Christian philanthropy will say—shame upon her if she does not—but above all and through all shines clear and steadfast the eternal purpose, to "gather together into one all things in Christ," to fulfil the Saviour's sacrificial prayer, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."

We come now to the third aspect of holiness, that which regards it as a perfect obedience to the law. Law addresses the will through the understanding. We are concerned therefore here both with light and life. Life we have already considered in its first beginnings and spontaneous impulses in the heart. We have now to consider its last issues and determinate workings, directed toward God and man, and to this the preceding observations will have served to point the way. Action is the final manifestation of character, and forms the principal ground of the judgment of the great day. Not that the secret desires of the heart will not also be laid bare. Action will not be judged without reference to the motive which constitutes its moral essence. On the other hand, motive will not be judged without reference to its embodiment in action. A desire is not a motive till it is suffered to influence the will. I may have repressed all evil desires, I

may have cherished all good ones. But the question remains, "What have I done?" This question must be answered, before a claim to a perfect character can be made out.

In order to answer it, we must ask three more. Is the law binding? Can we know its demands? And, if so, can we comply with them? To the first, three answers have been given. One is, It is abolished. Another, It is relaxed. A third, It is superseded. We believe it is neither abolished, nor relaxed, nor superseded. For the first we may cite Christ's words on the Mount, and Christ's work on the cross. He took off the burden of guilt to lay on the yoke of obedience. For the second, to maintain this would be to admit in substance what we have just denied in form. True, our circumstances differ from those of our first representatives. Both our fall and our redemption have a modifying effect on the law's demands. But I have no hesitation in saying that the effect is rather to increase than to diminish them. In principle, the standard is invariable: in the application of the principle, the widest diversity may prevail. And here the diversity is an amplification. In a sinless world, could this precept ever have been penned—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"? The law is not relaxed. But has it not been superseded? What means "ye are not under the law, but under grace"? It means, grace gives us power to keep the law. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law"? That means the same thing. The law does not curse those who fulfil it. All such it blesses, and curses not. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all

things." That does not contradict "Search the Scriptures," else why did John write either Gospel or Epistle? Listen not to the syren that says the law written in the heart supersedes a law inscribed on parchment or engraved in stone. The characters imprinted on the fleshly tablets of the heart need ever and anon to be cut deeper, and there is no pattern we can safely copy but that which Christ showed us in the Mount. We cannot dispense with the light because we have the life. For sure walking we need a sun to shine upon us, as well as eyes to rejoice in its beams.

Can we, in the second place, obtain the light we need? Can we know what God would have us do? At first sight, this question seems unnecessary. Are we not told that "love is the fulfilling of the law"? There is a sense in which it is the substance of the commandment, as well as the motive to its performance. Love is the sap of the tree of life, which, elaborated in the well-husbanded soil of our hearts, itself elaborates the fruit in its season. It both fashions the fruit and forms part of it. The commandment is expressed in terms of the most central of our faculties, in terms of feeling. It does not say "Thou shalt know," or "Thou shalt do," but, "Thou shalt love," that is, "Thou shalt feel." But it means the other two. It is not love in itself that is enjoined, but love as the mainspring of the action of our other powers. This bespeaks in our Creator an intimate acquaintance with the work of His own hands. Feeling is an element of all accurate perception, and of all sustained and intelligent effort. The commandment was not originally given to creatures destitute of the knowledge of God. Some knowledge is supposed, and the law says, If you would retain God in your knowledge, you

must love the God you know. So also the commandment was not first given to rebels: it supposes a will inclined to obey. And it says, If you would retain the power of obedience, you must love the God you serve. Hence the terms of our first great duty, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

And this perhaps for an unfallen creature would have been enough. In such a being a pure moral nature might be accompanied by an intelligence so luminous that, given the general principle, the particular applications would be self-evident, and, given the ultimate end, the intermediate stages might spontaneously present themselves. And in a world of beings similarly pure and similarly enlightened, the problems of casuistry would not arise. But it is not so with man, even redeemed man. Such is our ignorance that we often accept a general truth without seeing what consequences are involved in it, and we often desire an object without knowing what measures we must take to secure it. The law then, though one, divides into a multitude of precepts, each derived with unerring accuracy from itself, and each invested with equal authority. Thus, though the law is simple, we need that it should tell us how to keep it. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example.

The love of God is the love of rectitude. A man might say, that being so, I shall claim to have the right done to me, and shall exact it to the uttermost farthing. Sometimes, as the representative of God and society, it may be our duty to do so, and to avenge wrongs done against others as well as ourselves on the head of the guilty aggressor. But what means the caution, "Avenge not yourselves: vengeance

is Mine"? What is the explanation of this interdict? Why, that we are all fallen, and that we are all redeemed. We are all fallen: therefore "let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." We are all redeemed: therefore "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." The redeeming God is the pattern to redeemed man. The right we must aim to secure is not this or that particular right merely, not the general right which it is God's prerogative to defend, but the final triumph of right in the universe by the enthronement of Christ as its king. Sin has reigned in the world, I know, and it has reigned unto death, but we are not God's executioners commissioned to inflict the penalty. Christ has died, and for what purpose? That grace may henceforth reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

Thus we are assisted to answer the question, Can we know our duty? The answer is, though the law be love, we need all its precepts to instruct us, but with such a directory as it affords us, and with such an example as Christ has set, we shall not go astray. Let us take, however, a true estimate of our position. The law speaks to mankind at large. Even its minutest precepts must be construed with reference to the possibilities of the case. The needs of mankind are infinite: our powers and opportunities are very limited indeed. Who is to be the judge of such possibilities? Not the law, for that speaks to men generally, not individually. While we go to the law for general rules, must not something else frequently govern their application? What is that something? Is it not conscience? A conscience sprinkled by the blood of Christ, quickened by His Spirit and enlightened by contact with His

word, is our ultimate resource for the minutiæ of duty. The province of conscience does not lie in the framing of general rules. The law furnishes us with these. Conscience can never be pleaded against express declarations of the Word of God. But there is a wide field for its exercise within the bounds of Christian duty. Unanimity of judgment cannot be expected in the absence of a perfect understanding. Wilful ignorance is wilful sin. But ignorance that is steadily brought face to face with the Word of God and the facts of daily life, will soon change its designation, and become knowledge. Error there may still be, but not vital error, and even mistakes shall be overruled. Knowledge so obtained is the measure of evangelical obedience. Sincerity in the quest of truth may be regarded as forming, to such a conscience as I have described, the equivalent of truth absolute and universal. The law interpreted and applied by such a conscience represents for each the whole duty of man. The testimony of such a conscience, faithfully obeyed, will be a strong fortress when earthly things shall pass away. It will testify then as it does now, that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Can we obtain such a testimony? The law is set before us: can we keep it? The light shines upon our path: can we walk in it? None need doubt this, who know that Christ is our life. "A corrupt tree," He says, "cannot bring forth good fruit." But He also says "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." When the powers of the world to come work their full work within the soul, there is no halting in its gait. There is no breach between counsel and action. The rectified conscience is God's monitor only: it may or may not

be obeyed. The rectified will is the right arm of His strength, evidencing by its swift sure movements the power of an omnipresent Christ. The will is the union-point between God and man, the avenue at least by which He enters to possess us, the instrument by which He guards and rules His own. The life is His and ours too. The unity of the Spirit is a mystery not apprehended through sense, nor judged by reason, but grasped in penitence, and unfolded to faith. Those who come to the light and walk in it shall have their deeds made manifest, that they are wrought in God. Could Enoch in the days before the Flood obtain this testimony that he pleased God, and shall the highest reach of a Christian's sanctity fall below what he attained in an age the Sun of Righteousness never shone upon, an age of universal and gigantic crime? "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity"—a simplicity that scorns all doublings, a sincerity that stoops to no adulteration, both in aim and in fact like the God that gave it—"we have had our conversation in the world."

Perhaps we cannot find a better synonym for life in its hidden essence than power. The mysterious energy of the Holy Ghost is promised by our Lord as the "power from on high." Let us take some measures of it, that we may see how far this promise was fulfilled. We may gather them from the Epistles, where the ideal of Christianity so wonderfully blends with its actual results. Take, as one measure, the amazing parallel drawn between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Son in the first and second chapters of the Ephesians. Together with the second and third Colossians, it carries on and completes the figure of the sixth of Romans. There we died with Christ, and were raised with

Him from the dead: here we not only rise, but ascend with Him, and with Him sit down in the heavenly places. We share His severance from earth by the elevation of our earthly affections: we share His nearer access to God: we share His unbounded sovereignty. The cleansed priests are crowned kings: and it is righteousness that gives them the dominion. Measure this power again by its prevalence with God, "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Measure it by its prevalence over man, "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." Measure it by its defeat of forces it cannot subdue, earthly forces—"for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"—forces not of earth—"principalities, powers, spiritual wickedness in high places." Take an individual warrior, young Timothy, charged to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable," that he "fight the good fight of faith." Or the captain who led him to the field, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith—I am just laying my hand on the crown." Take the churches in their collective character, builded as lively stones into a temple, nourished up as living members of Christ's body unto a perfect man, identified with the whole family of God in heaven and earth, the youngest born below an astonishment and a praise to their celestial brethren. And if the goal is not yet reached, then take these glimpses of it. Perfection is the goal of God's eternal purpose, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." It is the goal of priestly type and prophetic aspiration—every pot in Jerusalem holiness unto the Lord, the glory upon every house-

hold, Aaron superseded by Melchisedec, the law of the carnal commandment lost in the power of an endless life, the way into the holiest made manifest, and the temple itself replaced by the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

Perfection is the goal of Christ's ministry above, which not attained, His intercession would be ineffectual, "wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is the goal of His atonement on earth, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," a statement not to be explained away as only germinant and proleptical in its accomplishment, any more than ceremonial or rhetorical in its bearing, but a promise sealed to Christ's church by His blood, and waiting to be fulfilled in every member. And this is not the only one. There are "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Perfection is the goal of the apostle's ministrations. "We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." How clear it stands before his eyes, "warning every man and teaching every man, that we may present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus." How he longs for this fruit of his labours. Taken from the Thessalonians in presence, not in heart, his longings cannot be contained, "night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face with joy, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith," the faith of all through the faith of each, not only the faith that "cometh by hearing," but the "faith which is of the operation of the Holy Ghost." The unknown Romans he desires to see, that he may impart

some spiritual gift, to the end they may be "established." Established, how? Why, like the Thessalonians, their hearts established, "unblameable in holiness before God." Good reason has he to anticipate that when he comes to them he will come "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." For from those who did not know him he can appeal to those that did. His example is a part of his theology. To the Ephesians he testifies before their face, "Ye know after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind." To the Thessalonians he writes in stronger terms, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." This claim he makes, not as apostle merely, but as pastor and teacher and saint of God. To the church that he "made sorry with a letter," that he exhorted to "put away from them that wicked person," the church that obeyed his exhortation, and that he then essayed to comfort, "this also we wish," he says, not the healing of the breach simply, "this also we wish, even your perfection," that perfection of the whole which could only be attained by the perfection of every part. And his final benediction is, "Be perfect."

I have spoken of perfection as the goal of many efforts and aspirations: let us remember that it is itself set before us as the starting-point of a yet higher course, destined to terminate in a goal more glorious still. The two words rendered "perfect" exactly express these two meanings. The one regards a thing as perfect in itself, fully realising its original plan. The other regards a thing as perfect in its adaptation to uses yet to be wrought out. The one is like the

perfection of a statue, the other like that of a machine. As then we have just now looked at perfection as an effect, and traced it back to its causes, so now let us look at perfection as a cause, and follow it out to its effects. Let us say to it, or to Christ, the Author and Finisher of it, "What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work?" Here, however, we must call to mind what was said before about the connexion between principle and act. If any are disposed to say, "Let works alone be the standard," we must remind them of our Lord's words to the Pharisees who made clean the outside of the cup and the platter,—"Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?" We must hold with St. John, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" But we must also hold with St. Paul, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Take then as samples of the fruit of this perfection, zeal, patience, the government of the tongue, and the new commandment. For the first we may quote the second Corinthians and the Hebrews. "And God is able to make, all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." Here we have the very heart and core of all evangelistic enterprise, from the leaders in the service to the poor widow who cast two mites into the treasury. The love of Christ constraining to an unreserved self-sacrifice—is not that a

phenomenon that has been seen in the Christian Church, and is it not the fruit of the effectual working of the powers of the world to come? But the bed-ridden paralytic, or the strong man whose strength is broken in a day, how shall such an one glorify God? St. Paul and St. James will tell us. The former thus: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." The latter thus: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And it is not the bed-ridden paralytic only that needs patience. The man strong to labour is not really strong without it.

For the government of the tongue, read the third of James: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Note the requirement as to the gift of speech: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The apparent impossibility of enduring such a test speaks the perfectness of the man who can stand it. The false tongue, the tongue that pierces as a sharp sword, the lascivious tongue, the profane tongue, the jesting tongue, when these are silenced, and in the place of them is a tongue whose utterances are "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable," or reverent, "whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," how Christ-like is the comeliness that is given to it! Ages before He came it was predicted of Him, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever." Perfection is not attained till man's word is to man what God's word is to God—as sacred, as reliable, as true an exponent of his inmost thought and being. And what shall we say of the new command-

ment? We are not speaking of it now as a principle in the heart, but as a power in the life. Read the thirteenth chapter of the first to the Corinthians, where the true, pure love so wonderfully contrasts with the lusts that simulate it, of which the offending member had been guilty. Is it not the fair girdle, set with precious stones, that joins in sweetest unity every other gift and grace? "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Thus perfection is the starting-point for a more distant goal. Even with charity ruling the heart and the life, have we however got beyond the region of duty? "When ye shall have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Not positively unprofitable, like the servant who was cast into outer darkness, but negatively unprofitable, in the sense that we have not given to God more than His perfect rectitude requires. In one portion of the mission-field, we have often heard, the climate is so deadly that none are sent to it but those who volunteer for this specific work. This post of danger has never been deserted, though death has continually struck down the men that occupied it. To the memory of each hero in this noble army of martyrs could any higher tribute be paid than this, "He did his duty"? We are not all called to fill the gap created by their fall. But if such were their ideas of duty, surely we may ask, What are ours? Do not trust those teachers who depreciate duty in extolling love. Those who do so slander both. They dissolve the marriage-tie between holiness and happiness, between the blessedness and the purity of the most High. What God hath joined, let no man put asunder. Here is the reconciliation, "O how I love Thy law.' Let no one persuade you that you may be a

law unto yourselves. Even if it be so, the law within must answer to the law without, for there cannot be two laws.

The law within not obscurely intimates what the law without plainly declares. Duty has for its terminus the final approbation of its Lord. Of this Scripture speaks in no doubtful tones. Christ tells us we are to be ready, the bride waiting for the Bridegroom, the servants listening to hear their Master's voice. And Peter assures us that we may "be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." In order to this we must not be content with such estimates of good and evil as we may form from our own imperfect knowledge of them. We must ponder God's estimates of them, as contained in the sanctions of His Word. Eternal life and eternal death, set over against each other, are God's sentence upon good and evil. His judgment must rule ours, a judgment not theoretical but practical, and to be pronounced, not on good and evil in the abstract, but on good and evil persons. The action of the Sovereign will embody the thought of the Judge. And as the thought is that of the All-wise, so the action will be that of the Almighty.

We need the twofold motive, the promised blessing to excite our hope, the threatened curse to move our fear. We must not say these motives are superfluous to those who are led by love. They were appealed to in paradise before sin defiled it. What would probation be, without a knowledge of its issues? Why were life and immortality brought to light? The finite is made for the infinite, and only by exercising themselves on the infinite can its powers expand and grow. And we cannot practically realise

the infinite except in connexion with that eternity to come, which is common to us and the infinite God. The holy oracles are everywhere instinct with the life everlasting. The scales have fallen from the eyes of every sacred seer. The Son of God, who was from eternity, entered the bounds of temporal existence in order to obtain eternal redemption for us. His second coming, like His first, derives its importance from the issues to which it will conduct us. And our faith, our hope, our love, will never be made perfect till "that day" governs every one that goes before it. Lose sight of eternity, think of Christ only as a Saviour for this present life, and your obligations will become of less account to you than the etiquette of the society in which you daily mix. The frown or smile of a mortal will be more to you than the frown or smile of your Judge. But live in eternity, and time will be invested with its grandeur. You will know then why Scripture makes no difference between them, and how it is that "he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." The dwindling span will occasion no alarm. The mortal conflict will be hailed with joy. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

In all this there is no transcendentalism. In the life we have been describing, the greatest mystery and the greatest reality stand face to face, and the one cannot be sundered from the other. There is no greater reality in the world than holy living. Nothing has more conspicuously stamped upon it the characters of genuine worth. Nothing pleads so

strongly with the consciences of men, testifying the wondrous power of spiritual convictions faithfully obeyed, and showing by contrast the falsehood and frivolity of every carnal life. Nothing leaves upon the mind, in its most rational moments, such an impression of what ought to be. Nothing suggests so irresistibly the supernatural behind the fleshly veil.

And where is this holy living ever found, apart from the supernatural? Faint outlines of it you may have seen, reflected from the surface of society on which some beams have fallen from those who were clothed with the true splendour. Some foreshadowings of it you may have noticed, like the false dawn before the sunrise, in the feeling after God of those who as yet find Him not. But where is the whole code of Christianity kept, except by those who acknowledge the authority of its Founder? Where is the unselfish devotion, not to this or that interest, but to all the interests of man? Where the noblest conceptions and loftiest hopes as to the destiny of the race even in this world? Where the ungrudging sacrifices of lifelong toil, amid privations and contumelies innumerable? Where the contented resignation to the common fate, or the glorious triumph of a martyr's end? Where are all these to be found, except in those whose dwelling is the secret place of the Most High, whose love is an overflow from the heart of the Redeemer, whose peace is the brooding of the Holy Dove, whose hope is laid up in heaven?

Uphold morality then, brethren, but uphold it always as holiness. Remember that the highest praise you can bestow on mere morality is to call it "unconscious religion." It is fallen nature's appeal for the succour of sovereign grace. It is the lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn and

the daystar arise in the heart. But who would prefer the earthly taper to the heavenly luminary, gray haze to golden sunshine, the cry for help to the shout of deliverance, the pulings of infancy to the calm strength of manhood, the first rudiments of formless chaos to the finished symmetry of the universe of God? Uphold morality, brethren, but let it be the morals of the cross. Commend the fruits of righteousness, but as you do so, point the way to the tree of life, where alone they can come to perfection.

Thus I have set before you, as far as time will allow, the great privilege of the children of God to be holy as He is holy. But you will not have understood me to mean that none of the blessedness I have been speaking of is tasted, except by those who can say with confidence that the very being of sin is destroyed. All the blessings of salvation, and the full perfection of them, belong as a matter of right to all the children of God. But the title is one thing, the enjoyment is another.

In this last respect believers differ, "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," and according, let me add, to the measure of each man's faithfulness. A great difference is observable between the ideal of the Christian life as it might be wrought out from the beginning, and the varying phases of actual experience. No one, with the Scriptures in his hands, would, I think, maintain that the attainment of perfection involves of necessity a *second crisis*. Those whom God justifies He also regenerates. From that hour they are clothed with such power over all sin that, by a diligent use of it, they may win continual victory, proceed from strength to strength, and rejoice in the certain hope that the evil which remains within them will

ultimately die the death. If they walk closely with God, that time will surely come. Yet, when it comes, it may not be with great observation. The bitterness of the death of nature is already past. "The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," a day that knows no decline, but an ever-brightening splendour. Yet there may be no special signal to mark the hour of noon.

Thus the normal regenerate life does not differ greatly from the same life after perfection is reached. The difference is mainly internal. Before, evil desires sprang up from the ground of the heart, which troubled the soul though they did not seduce it. Now, they no longer make their apppearance. Before, a portion of the soul's energy was lost in internal conflict. Now, the whole soul is at unity with itself. Christ's words, describing His relation to evil, are clear, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."

No professions of perfect purity should be made until this freedom is attained. Perhaps, if this condition were observed, such professions would be rare. And it is not desirable that they should be hastily made. The reticence on this point of some of the staunchest advocates of the doctrine of holiness, is remarkable. Great blessings are frequently received, which seem to sweep away every vestige of evil, and yet it is frequently found that the subtle poison is still at work, though with diminished vigour. Every such blessing should be held fast: though it be not perfection, it is an earnest of it. The great advantage of the doctrine of a full salvation does not lie in drawing a line between perfect and imperfect believers. It lies in drawing a line between those who are pressing toward the mark and those who are not, an advantage

lacking to those who say the mark can never be attained. The Bible has many blessings in its treasury, and they are all prepared for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It has many arrows in its quiver, and they are all shot out against those who draw back unto perdition.

But of how many can it be said that they have from the beginning of their course kept the goal steadily in view? How frequent is the confession of instability of purpose and fickleness of mind, of resolves made with scarcely a hope of their being carried out, of seeming accessions of spiritual strength which avail nothing in the presence of temptation, of a general languor in that pursuit which of all others demands lifelong constancy? What answer is to be given by the spiritual adviser to those who make such complaints? Is he to tell them to forget their own ailments in trying to cure those of other people? Work for Christ is certainly a means of grace, often helpful to those who are seeking the aid of the great Healer. But to make activity the specific would be to prescribe exercise to one who is dying of inanition. And the dying man who is thus bidden to rouse other dying men to exertion will surely be reminded of the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself."

It is vain to tell us we must do good in order to get good, until we know what is the good that is to be given and got. There is no remedy but to proclaim Christ as the life of the soul. The powers of the world to come must be invoked as sufficient to accomplish the purpose for which they have been brought within our reach. And this must be done boldly, unfalteringly, in full assurance of faith. No assertion of the sufficiency of Divine grace will be credited which admits that, owing to

human weaknesses, it may, nay must, be expected to fail. It is idle to laud the virtue of a medicine which is always baffled by the obstinacy of the disease. Were we to tell you that a life of moral weakness and failure is the highest style of the Christian, would your consciences bear you witness in the Holy Ghost that, after much laudation of an impossible excellence, we had at last been constrained to speak the truth? Would your intelligence accept a statement so contrary to all you have ever heard from this place, as a new and authoritative oracle from God, as the best of all anodynes to a wounded spirit, as at once the strongest stimulus to holy living and the surest preparative for holy dying? Or does not conscience itself clamour for that very obedience which our slow hearts pronounce it impossible to pay?

There are some who, nevertheless, would have us frame a compromise. That is their meaning, although they do not use that word to denote it. Perhaps the best form in which we could express their wishes would be this, "Since so many have made religion a mere meditation of death and judgment, and in their solicitude to prepare for the next world have forgotten the duties of this, let us see to it that we avoid their error. Let us try to make this life what it ought to be, and not concern ourselves so much about the life to come." This advice might be good if there were an irreconcilable antagonism, instead of the closest connexion, between the two sets of duties. It cannot indeed be denied that some have forgotten to turn their contemplations of futurity to the account of practical everyday life. But an undue absorption in the latter is an extreme at least equally dangerous with an undue absorption in the former. It is a

great peril of the present day. It robs life, not only of its grandeur, but of its meaning. It is by turns cause and effect of an ever-strengthening scepticism. Men begin by shirking the obligations of God's service. They end by denying His existence.

Some who have not reached this stage have yet gone so far as to renounce all pretensions to spirituality. On what theory of human society or of Divine revelation, it would be hard to say. Probably they do not know themselves. They are much more bold in attack than in defence. They are often busy in denouncing error, seldom fortunate in finding truth, the jewel they profess to be so eagerly in quest of. Tried by their own test of practice, these professors will generally be found wanting. Such duties as a heathen might perform they perhaps attend to. Some even of those peculiar to Christianity are not disdained, but the selection is discriminating. The question, What do ye more than others? would be out of place here. The services of the sanctuary are approved, if rendered with due regard to the fastidiousness of culture, and if accompanied by an artistic psalmody which soothes the æsthetic sensibilities. But the truth itself, so earnestly coveted, must not be too pungently expressed. This is a religion that boasts its unobtrusiveness. It shuns the glare of publicity. It is hidden, in great measure, from itself.

And what is the reason of all this? Is it not that personal relations with a personal God are unknown? The true, the beautiful, and the good, are talked about as if they were the realities: the great living Archetype is forgotten. Meanwhile, on the natural side, the soul has vivacity enough. Passing contests excite enthusiastic

interest, without minute inquiry whether the prize is worth so much devotion. There is no lack of good fellowship and every other worldly virtue: it is only when spiritual sympathies are in question that the man is not himself. The real work of the life is done in the six days of the week: the seventh is a blank, a fault in the strata, an incomprehensible gap in an otherwise well arranged plan of existence. Everything would work harmoniously, if only God and Christ, death and judgment, an accusing conscience and a world of dying men, could be effectually kept out of view. The whole desire of the soul is fixed on perishable good, and nothing makes the heart so sick as the mention of good that is imperishable. The greatest unrealities of all are the facts that are the most inevitable.

I might easily go on adding touches to the picture, but I leave you to fill up the outline—not, I hope, from personal experience. Only, when you have done so, do not write on the margin of the canvas, "This is the portrait of a Christian." Are such characters depicted in the Bible? They are. You need not go to the Old Testament: turn to the last pages of the New. Open the book of Revelation, not in its symbolical but in its historical part. The limner is the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the record, from Ephesus to Laodicea, Smyrna and Philadelphia alone excepted. Whole churches tremble at His rebuke: they quail beneath the eye of His omniscience. They are like the daughters of Zion in the prophecies of Isaiah, with the bravery of their ornaments taken away. They are like Israel itself, sold into captivity and become a servant unto tribute. They are still the Lord's people, but are gone forth out of His land. He

bears long with their rebellions, till they remember Zion and spread forth their hands toward Jerusalem. But if they still forsake Him, He will cast them off for ever.

Let us commiserate those who are in such a case. Perhaps they will spurn our pity, thinking themselves to be "rich and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing;" not knowing that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." But whatever we concede to them, one thing we cannot concede, that theirs is the only rational religion. We cannot allow them to decry the spiritual life as a worn-out relic of the ages of faith: their predecessors of a century ago decried it as a new-fangled innovation. The life of God in the soul of man is neither new nor old: like the word of God, the spiritual seed of which it is engendered, it liveth and abideth for ever. One only portion can we offer those who spurn it, the Nicodemus message, "Ye must be born again."

Many of those who had left their first love have been restored to more than their pristine strength. Profiting by their former fall, they betake themselves to their pilgrimage with much more wariness and ardour. They now walk closely with God. The prophecy of their conversion has become a glorious fulfilment. Like Israel of old, they are put in possession, after long wandering, of what might have been theirs from the day they came out of Egypt. Like the patriarch Job, the Lord has turned their captivity, and blessed their latter end more than their beginning. They now go on unto perfection. They do not say they have attained it: that may be matter of doubt. But they set the Lord always before them. His law is their delight. They have embarked with Christ, and are content to take their lot as it falls with

Him. They order their conversation as becomes the subjects of such a Prince. They have an intimate and unspeakable union with Him. Hence they find it easy to keep His commandments. They do not presume upon this friendship, as though it warranted any familiarity with the holy and reverend name. They remember that they are servants while they are friends. And they anticipate the hour when they shall say experimentally, "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

Is it any wonder if those who are thus leading the true regenerate life, that life which alone becomes the children of God, should call it "the higher life"? Or if they should call the fulness of privileges received at their conversion, but lost and now restored with increase, a "second blessing"? The terms may not be theologically accurate, nor find any warrant in Scripture, except the fact, therein admitted, that men frequently faint by the way. But we ought not severely to blame those who employ these terms. They only wish to emphasize the necessity of a higher life than many Christians are content to lead, and of a second blessing for those who through unfaithfulness have forfeited, or well-nigh forfeited, the first. There is no doubt whatever that very many Christians do need to be "renewed again unto repentance." And there is nothing Pharisaic in telling them so. The above terms can only be misleading, if supposed to imply that God does not give at regeneration a grace which, persevered in, will certainly issue in a perfect character, a perfect communion, a perfect compliance with the will of God. But this is not at all necessarily implied. And the language is so far convenient that, while it makes the aim at perfection characteristic of the truly

Christian life, it does not commit those who use it to a claim of perfection itself. Of any professions of the pursuit of holiness which are unattended by the appropriate fruits of it, I say nothing.

There are many Christians who stoutly deny what we as stoutly defend. Let us honour their motives: they are identical with our own, and chief among them is a jealousy for God's glory. But whoever may deny this doctrine, we cannot. We have not only subscribed to it with our hands: we are wedded to it in our hearts. If it be an error, we can point to the history of our Church as the proof that it is not vital, inasmuch as it has not only been generally harmless, but productive, on the whole, of the most blessed results. Many of the noblest and most beautiful lives in the whole round of Methodist biography—and it is a wide region—have drawn their inspiration from this source. They never regarded the pursuit of holiness as the labour of a Sisyphus: they obeyed the injunction, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." There is, it must be acknowledged, a tendency on the part of some that are uninstructed to rely too exclusively on internal experiences. This has provoked on the part of others a reaction which runs to an opposite extreme. Safety lies, not in exclusive attention either to an inward or an outward standard, but in the harmonious application of the two.

I have chosen to treat the subject in the form in which I have brought it before you for another reason. Round the three words which have suggested this evening's meditations, a battle rages which affects the whole future, not only of theological but all other thinking, not only of ecclesiastical but all other interests which the philanthropist

and the Christian hold dear. For the first. In philosophy and morals, some say there is no standard other than a conventional one—a doctrine fraught with consequences which many volumes would not fully unfold. Our reply to it is, "God is Light." Questions of right and ought and duty He makes us ask in the secret of our consciousness, He makes us answer in our outward daily life. We are under the law to God.

Some admit this in principle who neutralise its effects by false views of the second symbol, "God is Love." They sunder the relation which God has established between the moral nature of His creatures and His own. They invent a relation that God has not established between Him and His creatures, irrespective of their attitude toward Him. They degrade God's love into an instinct: they degrade themselves into playthings which that instinct is too much charmed with ever to consent to miss their solace. Man may do without God, such persons virtually say, but God can never do without man. Our reply must be the whole verse, "God is love, and He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him." Or the whole of the other verse, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." All that walk in the light dwell in the love. And those who will not rejoice in the radiance of the light must come into the condemnation of it, and in their condemnation justify the God whose love they slighted. [2.]

Lastly, there are some who take false views of the truth that closes the epistle, "This is the true God, and Eternal Life." They deny the moral and spiritual significance of the term "life." They say it means continuance in being. They confound the moral image of God with the natural

image which is its basis. And, contradicting alike their own consciousness and the teaching of the Bible, they make our hold of the one depend on our hold of the other. The fifth chapter of John's Gospel is against them. It clearly distinguishes our natural from our moral life. It distinguishes the two resurrections, the spiritual resurrection which precedes death from the physical resurrection which shall follow it. Our answer must be the words of the apostle, "This is the true God, and Eternal Life." What He imparts He is, and that is more than existence. It is the energy of a new creation, the promise of the Father, the purchase of the Son, the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is the life opposed in the Fourth Gospel to damnation: it is the life identified in the Hebrews with righteousness: it is the life of God in the soul of man.

Only as we realise in ourselves the meaning of these symbols shall we ever be able to defend them. It will not be long before that man's voice falters, whose heart departeth from the living God. The spiritually blind will not long remember the glories of the light they once beheld, much less will they be able to make other blind men see. The dead will not arouse their sleeping companions, nor the heart that is at enmity with God rejoice to proclaim His love. Let our fidelity be the fruit of our faith, and a church that has no adventitious aids to her prosperity will long be the salt of the earth. Her children within her will dwell in peace, their gratitude to a Saviour present in the midst of them pouring itself forth in works of righteousness and fruits of brotherly love, such as this Conference has to record. Her successive generations will pass unchallenged through the open gates: her light will enlighten the world

while it lasts, and mingle in the blaze of eternity when it shall have passed away. Her compact phalanx, steadfast to the end, shall dissolve in the higher unity of the celestial host. The saints shall greet their Saviour at His long-deferred appearing. And then shall every man have praise of God.

We will conclude with the prayer from the Communion Service, which embodies all that has been said to-night, "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name through Christ our Lord. Amen."

NOTES.

[1.]

The relations of philosophy and theology open a field of discussion too wide to be entered upon here. Some persons would deny all connection between the two, an overweening attachment to one blinding them to the claims of the other. Some who do not go so far as this, make one the despotic mistress of the other, forgetting that no truth can bind another truth, any more than it can be bound itself. The provinces of philosophy and theology, considered as sciences, are coordinate, but distinct. The relations of their several cultivators can only be friendly so long as their actuating motives are pure. The line between the two departments of inquiry is sufficiently distinct. Theology discusses the relations of man to the worlds within, around and above him, from the supernatural standpoint. Philosophy discusses the same relations from the natural standpoint. There is no reason why either should deny the right of the other to occupy a position different from its own.

In the text, I have endeavoured to pay due regard to both the liberties and the limits of each science. I have admitted the competency of the philosopher to discuss our mental and moral constitution (pp. 2—6, 29, 30). But I have also said or implied that, as soon as that constitution is viewed as modified by supernatural influences, the philosopher oversteps his province, and enters that of the divine (pp. 1, 17). And I have noticed the failure of philosophy, apart from the light which revelation brings, to trace either to their origin or to their issue the series of moral phenomena whose individual features she has more or less successfully depicted. The

human *investigation* of the facts of our moral and spiritual life has, I hope, nowhere in these pages failed to bear witness to their Divine *origination*.

[2.]

Jonathan Edwards is responsible for a good deal of weakness in Evangelical teaching on both sides of the Atlantic. The following sentence, from his treatise "On the Nature of True Virtue," will illustrate my meaning. "It must be noted that the degree of the amiableness of true virtue, primarily consisting in consent and a benevolent propensity of heart to being in general, is not in the simple proportion of the degree of benevolent affection seen, but in a proportion compounded of the greatness of the benevolent being, or the degree of being, and the degree of benevolence." On this Sir James Mackintosh remarks, "The justness of the compound proportion on which human virtue is made to depend, is capable of being tried by an easy test. If we suppose the greatest of evil spirits to have a hundred times the bad passions of Marcus Aurelius, and at the same time a hundred times his faculties, or, in Edwards's language, a hundred times his quantity of being, it follows from this moral theory that we ought to esteem and love the devil exactly in the same degree as we esteem and love Marcus Aurelius." Whether any one ever did work out one of the infinite series of proportion sums that Edwards propounds to every human being, as necessary to be solved before he can be called truly virtuous, may be a question. Omitting this consideration, we may ask, What is the "good" which a benevolent being wishes to see produced in the objects of his affection? It is obvious that "good" must mean either all sorts of pleasure and gratification, or else the happiness inseparable from moral perfection. No one will say that a being is truly benevolent who seeks to confer upon his clients all sorts of pleasure indiscriminately. He alone is truly benevolent who in all that he may do for his fellow-creatures, seeks to promote their moral perfection. Benevolence thus understood must have its root in that complacency in rectitude which we have affirmed to be the essence of holy love, whether in God or man.

The ambiguity of the term happiness, as currently employed in moral reasonings, is a fruitful source of error. Love is frequently spoken of as if it had nothing to do with the moral character of those to whom it is directed, as if in fact it were a mere propension toward being. The second element of Edwards's proportion sum is left out of the account altogether. We ought to love all that exists, simply because it exists. Many of those who adopt this language apply it without scruple to the Divine Being, and in such a way as to interfere with His prerogatives as Sovereign and Judge of all. He also loves everything that exists, because He has given it existence: therefore—such is the argument—He cannot punish, at least eternally, those who owe their being to Himself. Such a God, it is said, could not be loved at all. Yet it is plain, from the first axiom of this spiritual geometry, that supposing such a Being to exist, He ought to be loved, *because He exists.* And whatever may be the truth about His character, there is no doubt at all about the character of His foe. Do those who say virtue consists in universal well-wishing really mean that we must love the devil?

Jonathan Edwards's teaching is reflected in that of Dwight, Finney and Upham. These names ought never to be mentioned without profound respect for the character and talents of those who bore them. Yet I cannot but think that the views here adverted to must fail to produce a robust type of piety, like that of the old Puritans and first Methodists.

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